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ADDRESS DELIVERED
BEFORE THE PHIL-
OLOGICAL INSTITUTE.

By

Wilson McCandless

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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

PHILOLOGICAL INSTITUTE,

ON THE EVENING OF THEIR EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY IN THE
CHAPEL OF THE WESTERN UNIVERSITY
OF PENNSYLVANIA.

BY WILSON M'CANDLESS, ESQ.

Published by order of the Institute.

PITTSBURGH:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM D. WILSON.

1836.

Ilax.
F146
M12.2
20p.!

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Extract from the minutes of Philological Institute.

RESOLVED, That the Committee of Arrangement be requested to solicit a copy for publication, of the Address delivered by Wilson M'Candless, Esq. before Philological Institute, on the evening of the 8th of December last, its 8th Anniversary.

To WILSON M'CANDLESS, Esq.

SIR—The undersigned, Committee of Arrangement for the celebration of the 8th anniversary of Philological Institute, have, in accordance with the above Resolution, the pleasure of conveying to you on the part of our Society, our high sense of gratification, excited by your very able Address on the evening alluded to; and request from you as a member, and in behalf of Philological Institute, a copy for publication.

With sentiments of respect and friendship,

M. B. MILTENBERGER,
WM. M. SHINN,
THOS. M. HOWE,
} Com. of Arran.

Pittsburgh, December 19, 1835.

PITTSBURGH, DEC. 20, 1835.

Gentlemen—Your request for publication is complied with; at the same time I feel sensible, that the encomium you have been pleased to express, is much beyond the merits of the performance.

Your obedient servant,

WILSON M'CANDLESS:

Messrs Miltenberger, Shinn and Howe,
Of the Committee,

A D D R E S S.

Mr. President and Gentlemen—

Anniversary celebrations bring with them pleasing and interesting reminiscences. They are replete with the lessons of wisdom. They concentrate the vicissitudes and stirring events of past years, and pass in review before you, the dark result of many a bright hope, and the brilliant success of many a fond anticipation.— They carry you back to the period of your first association, and revive the motive and inducement which led to a combination of your individual energies. You were then youthful mariners on an unknown sea, without chart or compass, and unacquainted with the first rudiments of navigation. Experienced seamen were not with you, the winds and tide were against you, yet you recur to the scene as one where hope beamed from the countenance of every associate, expressive of that ardor and emulation, which stimulated you to the glorious enterprise. Ignorance circumscribed you round about ; here was a dogma, and there a heresy, to be overthrown, and although you wanted the implements of the orator, and the arts of the lo-

gician, to overcome them, you looked upon this mutual union, as the cradle of the giant, which was to rock into strength the nerve and the muscle for future action.

Every association has its anniversary, and each its mode of celebration.

The military usher in the day on which was fought the battles of their country, and victory perched upon her standards, with the thunder of artillery, and all the “pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war.” They remodel the tomb of departed worth, recut and retrace the lines of the epitaph, and strew flowers over the graves of the brave and the chivalrous. Public orations are pronounced, celebrating in laureate strains, the deeds of the victors ; and from the Orient to the Occident, are sounded hosannahs to the warrior, who by his valor has elevated the name and honor of his country.

Commencement Day in the city and land of the pilgrims is a time of universal rejoicing—a joy in which every one, alive to the interests of education, participates—a joy, not confined to the aristocracy of wealth and learning, but pervading all classes of society. Ancient Harvard, the prolific mother of noble sons, on that day lifts up her head, and in dedicating her last progeny, at the baptismal altar of her country, gives the world assurance of intellectual men. Phi-Betta-Kappa, and her numerous sisters,

assemble round the maternal fireside, to consult upon an extension of the family benefits. Thousands upon thousands, are added to the family purse, and books heaped upon books in the family library. Men, whose worth and excellence, whose profound talents, and lofty character, have been buried amid the dust of antiquity, are brought to light; and apt limners are employed, to paint them, in glowing colors, and as prominent objects, on the great canvass of human society.

Without naming others, all your benevolent institutions, anticipate the anniversary of their organization, with fond delight. On that day the account of good accomplished is cast up, and exhibited to the world, as an inducement for their continuance, and an argument for the contributions of the community. They tell you that in infancy, and with a handful, they commenced an undertaking which confounded the weak by its magnitude, but that that faith which overcomes the moral avalanche in its progress, brought about the accomplishment of their most sanguine anticipations. They ask you to look to that zeal which carries men from their homes to regions beyond the Ganges, and to the sources of the Niger, seeking and disseminating knowledge, and then to turn and contemplate that heart, larger than a mountain, which could resolve to furnish every hamlet up-

on the face of the inhabitable globe, with that ray of the divine light, which God hath sent down from Heaven, to illuminate the path of men.

Your celebration then, gentlemen, is not without precedent, but is in accordance with the usages of institutions of great celebrity. It is not an empty pageant. You do not convene to minister at the alter of personal vanity, to shew off the knowledge which you have acquired ; but to awaken interest, to excite to action, and to invite those who have not trodden in the same path with yourselves, to imitate an example which if pursued, will lead to pleasures which no riches can purchase.

Before taking a cursory view of your Institute, permit me briefly to recur to the history of Literature in our own state, and witness its gradual and swelling progress.

When Penn projected the colonization of Pennsylvania, it was principally for religious and scientific purposes. Coming as he did, from the immediate presence of a court, where there was no restraint upon excess of every description, it is a matter of special wonder, that the wise policy of Penn's project and government, should have been the offspring of such an age. Charles II, upon his accession to the British crown, assembled round him the butterflies of fashion, and all the parasites of corrupt

royalty. As the preceding administration of the government had been marked by a strict adherence to religious tenets of a peculiar nature, he and his followers, misconceiving religion to have been the cause of their misfortunes, discarded from their thoughts and conduct every moral and religious consideration. Extravagance and dissipation sat enthroned in British purple, and the more immediate receptacles of the royal favor, were the gallant and the gay, instead of the wise and the learned. Proceeding from the shades of adversity, where they had been permitted to remain during the success of Cromwell's

“Drum Ecclesiastic,”

holding life by a most precarious tenure, the transition was too sudden, and prosperity like the whirlpool, swallowed them up. Misfortune, which case-hardens most men, and enables them to withstand the shock of sudden advancement, had no effect upon them. They pursued the phantom pleasure only, with the same untiring energy, and held to her with the same unrelenting tenacity that the lion hearted Richard did, in pursuit of glory and the Holy Land.

In the midst of this circle of gay courtiers, “these glasses of fashion and moulds of form,” was to be seen the corpulent body, and broad brimmed hat of William Penn, not participating in the dissipations of the Court, but endea-

vouring to advance the cause of religion and of science, by seeking the favor of his Sovereign. Possessing high claims upon the gratitude of the British King and people, in consequence of the execution by his father, of lofty achievements by sea and land, the royal ear was turned towards him in token of approbation, and the royal hand granted him that domain, which is now the pride of the American Union.

As freedom of religious opinion was to dwell here unmolested, Penn gathered round him numerous followers, who bade their native land "good night," and sailed for those shores where the rights of speech and conscience were to be tolerated without reference to the doctrines of any established church. The wind filled the sails, and the blue waters divided before the prow of the noble vessel, as she wended her way towards the setting sun. As the "cloud-capped towers" and lofty spires of London faded from their view, they approached the venerable patriarch who was conducting them to the promised land. In the stern features of his countenance, they beheld the index of that moral resolution, which nerves the arm to the achievement of noble designs. There was no passion there to disturb the holy calm of his bosom, "as the storm disturbs the serenity of the placid ocean." No ignoble aspirations for universal dominion, no ambitious designs for individual eleva-

tion, dwelt in that dignified form. In his mild temperament they discovered the softening influence of the divine precepts, and in his conduct the philanthropic purpose of establishing a government upon the broad basis of justice and equal rights. Buoyed up by these consolatory and animating reflections, they invoked the divine blessing upon the enterprise, and the sad recollection of parting friends, and relatives, was effaced by the well grounded expectation of a glorious future.

They landed ! How full of interest are those words to the sons and daughters of Pennsylvania ? And then occurred the great act of Penn's life which will reach down, and shine in glowing lustre, to the latest posterity—his purchase, and treaty with the Indians.

Not content with the Royal Charter, for land which the royal eye had never seen, and very properly conceiving the native occupants of the soil to be the lawful owners, he called around him the Sachems of the tribes and made a fair purchase of their territory. He told them he came not as a conqueror, nor entertaining the spirit of enmity, but to cultivate friendship and good will with them and all their people. He said “ he would not call them brothers or children only, for brothers would often differ, and parents were apt to whip their children. Neither would he compare their friendship to a chain, for

the rain might sometimes rust it, or a tree fall and break it, but he would consider them as the same flesh and blood with christians, the same as if one man's body was divided into two parts."

Such was the graphic speech of this great philanthropist and christian to these uncouth sons of the forest. Fire and sword were not the weapons of his warfare, but brotherly kindness and charity. Unlike the policy of the present day, he did not expel them from the lands of their fathers without an equivalent and without their consent. The Indians appreciating the magnanimity and justice of his conduct, as evincing the noblest traits of humanity, pledged themselves to live in love with William Penn and his children, as long as the rivers and the mountains, and the sun and moon should endure: and the result has shown, that the sanctity of the obligation has been respected. Pennsylvania was then a broad territory of woodland without cultivation or improvement. The comfortable signs of human society were no where visible. The wild beast and the Indian maintained universal and exclusive dominion. The vast treasure, which lay embedded in our mountains, and the noble rivers which now bear on their bosoms the rich freight of a prosperous people, were then unemployed, and unappreciated. Human science had not then shed its light,

and human skill had not applied its touchstone to these sources of wealth.

Although Penn brought with him much of the intelligence of his country, and based his government upon a moral foundation, yet his people were destitute of that intellectual refinement, which is every where incident to the cultivation of letters. The physical wants of the body demanded their constant attention; and they had little opportunity afforded them, of improving the mind. As the blade of the broad axe glistened in the sun, and at his commanding nod, brought down the green lord of the forest, they looked upon his prostration, more as one step towards the advancement of individual comfort, than as founding a temple to the arts and sciences.

In 1686 the first Press was established in Philadelphia, and its first production was an Almanac, the precursor of rivers of knowledge, which have flown from the same source. From that moment may be dated the enlightenment of Pennsylvania. All the schools and colleges which are now the pride and the ornament of our state, take that as their birthday. All our scientific and literary institutions, those streams of living water, acknowledge that as their fountain. And all the millions of volumes, which have here issued from a prolific press, for the

last century, bœw to the paternity of this their legitimate father.

The press has been more potent than the steam engine. The former has added to the intellectual, the latter to the physical power of man. Steam, but not its expansion, has been known from time immemorial, and all the material for the engine was known to the world before the flood. The iron was in the mountains, and the wood grew in profusion upon the hills, inviting their application to the purposes of man, yet if the press had not afforded facilities for an interchange of views among scientific men, and promulgated one discovery in science after another, this mighty agent would not, to this day, have become the bondman of the mechanic, compelled to do his daily labor without fee or reward. For years after this discovery first beamed upon the human mind, the ardour of genius was dampened by the taunts of the ignorant, and it was not until the press became the protector of his rights, that he was placed upon a distinguished and enviable elevation.

We cannot claim as Pennsylvanians that the first application of steam to the propelling of boats was within our borders, but we can claim both as Pittsburghers, and Pennsylvanians, that the first *successful* experiment was made upon the limped waters of our own rivers. It was here that Fulton resorted, after being driven

from the Hudson, by the icy coldness of New York. It was here, that his mighty genius expanded into life, under the genial warmth of a Pennsylvania sun.

To dilate upon the effect of this invention upon our city, our country and the world, would be wandering, if I have not already wandered too much from the subject under consideration.

Our constitution contains a wise provision for the education of the people. To carry this into operation, many institutions, scientific and literary, have been incorporated by law. Of these some are flourishing, some have dwindled into insignificance, and others are rising in greatness, like the *Phœnix* from its ashes.— Among the latter may be numbered my *alma mater*, in whose Chapel, and in the presence of whose learned Faculty, we are now assembled. I am sure I shall not derogate from the interest and object of the present meeting, in expressing my ardent desire, that her spire may yet glimmer 'in the loftiest sunbeam,' far above those of the rival institutions which surround her, and be gazed upon with gratitude and veneration, by generations yet to come.

The subject of education by common schools has engaged the attention of our wisest legislators. Patriotic chief magistrates have urged it upon their consideration for a series of years. Every citizen who had at heart the true interest

of Pennsylvania, and desired her permanent exaltation, has petitioned for the extension of its advantages: but it was not until the year 1832 that the Education Bill passed both houses of the Legislature and became a law.

The thick cloud of darkness which has heretofore overshadowed us, is now fast dissipating, and the heavens are becoming "more and more light unto the perfect day." The result of this important enactment, will not have been fully developed, until long after we shall have mingled our bones with the clod of the valley. Many a mind that now lies neglected and forgotten in the retirements of poverty, will be nurtured and brought up. Many a chosen son of genius, emanating nence, will go forth to command attention and provoke praise. Our commerce will flourish, because numbers will be added to our intelligent merchants. Our manufactories will multiply, because every artisan will become a Philosopher, understanding the theory as well as the practice of his art. As population and improvements in machinery increase, there will be less labour required to answer the demands of society; and there will consequently be more time afforded to those, whose taste and inclination lead them, to attend to the more grave discussions of the Porch, or to wander amid the groves of modern Arcadia. Instead of having one Franklin, we will have scores.

who will bring down the lightening from heaven. Instead of having one James Ross, we will have hundreds, who will hold listening senates in breathless admiration.

However necessary it may be at present to go to the Grecian archipelago to illustrate subjects of literary interest: or however fashionable it may be to recur to the ancient or English golden age, for mighty examples of intellectual greatness, our own country will then afford instances, which if they do not appear to as much advantage as their predecessors, it will be because time and distance have not softened the roughness incident to every thing human. Our soil and climate lay open to the Philosopher, boundless subjects for scientific examination, and to the Poet an ever varying scene of beautiful and captivating imagery. Our institutions, free as the air we breathe, present to the Politician a field of research, where the view only becomes indistinct, from the comprehensiveness of the vision. And in the various ramifications of our complicated political machinery, may be found a model for human governments, in all succeeding ages.

And now permit me to take a rapid glance at the Institution with which you are connected.

In the midst of a community, the breath of whose nostrils is industry, surrounded by works

of art, and monuments of ingenuity, and by machinery, which in the days of the Cyclops would have terrified the refinement of antiquity, you are pursuing a course of literary cultivation unaided by the presence of learned and august professors. The luxuriance of the tree is pruned with your own hands, and its strength preserved without detracting from the beauty of its proportions. Like the mustard seed in the parable, it is growing with prolific rapidity, and will ere long become the resting place of many, who seek refuge from the ignorance so prevalent in the world. Many of you have witnessed the progress of this Institute from its infancy, growing with its growth and strengthening with its strength. The benefits which you have received, attach you to it, with cords not less strong, than those which bind a dutiful child to its parent, who has been prodigal in his expenditure to polish and refine him for the higher walks of human society.

The tender thought has here been reared.—The obstructions which impede the progress of the aspirant for literary fame have here been overcome, and many finished productions emanating from your Hall have obtained “a local habitation and a name” in some of the most popular periodicals of the day. Your literary prowess cannot be questioned. At the entrance to the lists the persuivant has heralded your

name, and many a doughty champion who had acquired honors in tournaments of superior bravery, has retreated, unwilling to hazard a tilt, with your ambitious and youthful activity.

Whence proceeds this improvement, Gentlemen? from industry, emulation and honest ambition; from that laudable desire of each to be superior to his fellow, and to add lustre to the circle in which he moves.

The conflict of mind with mind has developed the strength of adversary power, called forth the latent energies, and added vigor to every limb and muscle of the intellectual frame.— Many of you are like warriors always ready for the fight, and with bosoms swelling with aspiration of a noble nature, you rush to the contest, “not with the fierce animosity and bitter acrimony of savage combatants, but rather with the gentle courtesy of the heroes of the Iliad, who shook hands and exchanged weapons in the pause of conflict.”

No mean principle is to be found in your code of morals, because the legitimate result of literary cultivation is to improve the habits and refine the feelings of every society. He who soars high will breathe a purer air, and if malaria is exhaled from swamps of human iniquity; if a moral pestilence does stalk abroad in the land, scattering misery and desolation like the whirlwind, you are above its contaminating in-

fluence. Vice has no dwelling place with you —her spirit is not kindred with yours. The faithful portraits you have here drawn of her deformity, and the virtuous bursts of indignation which have proceeded from your lips, against those who walk in her footsteps, are sure indications of literary advancement.

Quinctilian says—

“ *Nemo orator nisi vii bonus.*”

Out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh. If the source be impure, the stream will be impure also. But if the nature is ennobled and the affections purified by scientific attainments, it is then that eloquence dazzles and strikes with irresistible force, and no obstacle, however formidable, can withstand its power.

Your future prospects, gentlemen, must be brilliant. If you have imbibed the spirit of inquiry, you will not be satisfied with light potations, those shallow draughts which intoxicate the brain, without imparting nutriment to the mind. You will be the friends of colleges and universities, the patrons of works of literary merit, and the promoters of every scheme which has for its object the extension of the dominion of the Republic of letters.

Exercising the same unremitting application, which has characterized many of you, studying with care the models of human greatness and analizing their motives and actions, you will be-

come filled with "that ardent and unrelenting ambition, which accompanies the consciousness of great powers, and seems implanted where they exist for the purpose of bringing them into action."

ERRATA.—Page 8, first line, for 'inhabitable,' read 'habitable'—second line, read 'has' for 'hath'—third line, 'illumine' for 'illuminate'—fourth line, 'inan' for 'men.'



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